

The Senses of Quality



Single point of reference for customer service quality

Enghouse Interactive Quality Survey 2015

YOU GET WHAT YOU MEASURE

BRINGING A SENSE OF QUALITY TO CUSTOMER SERVICE TODAY

Most organisations agree that the customer service quality they provide is key to driving customer loyalty, building incremental revenues and ultimately driving business success. They differ, however, in how they define quality and how effectively they overcome the barriers they face in achieving it. For some organisations it is still about average handle time, for others it might be about first call resolution or attaining a high net promoter score (NPS). All businesses would surely agree that measurement is key to quality but quality is inevitably also partly about perception. And from the perspective of customer service that perception is often sensory.

Get the sense of the sound of your business. Customer-facing organisations need to listen to the quality of their service by monitoring performance, improving service, ensuring compliance and resolve disputes. This is needed across all channels especially online. Therefore, it's essential to keep your business-savvy ear to the ground.



Sight is key too of course. Managers need to be presented with the information visually to get a true picture of how their customer service function is performing. By visualising information on wallboards or online dashboards, for example, both in real-time and historically, customer-facing business units can use available information to enhance their products and drive their marketing and sales initiatives.



When we extend the theme to the sense of touch, the focus becomes more metaphorical than literal, but the message remains clear. Organisations need to ensure they have a hands-on understanding of the customer service they are delivering and that they are keeping in touch with their customers' needs.



WHAT DOES QUALITY MEAN?

Currently, confusion reigns in terms of what constitutes quality service delivery. A recent poll run by Enghouse Interactive into the opinions of UK business workers revealed a lack of consensus. Worryingly perhaps, nearly one in ten respondents claimed not to have any understanding of quality service delivery in the contact centre. Yet, the top six options provided to the survey sample each received a broadly comparable level of support.



It is encouraging, however, that the top option provided by respondents was **'delivering effortless customer service to the greatest possible number of customers'** cited by **42%**.

After all, most customers are looking to get the optimum customer experience from their interaction with the business with the least possible effort on their part. **'Achieving high levels of first call resolution or first contact resolution'** was the **second most popular option** (highlighted by **41%** of the sample).

A surprisingly high number of businesses seem to be stuck in the past. **37%** (of respondents highlighted the) 'ability to drive down average handle time and answer calls more quickly' as key to their understanding of quality service delivery. This was the third most popular option overall.

It seems clear that dependent on job function and vertical focus, business people often like to select their own statistic of preference and link it to quality.

The reality is more complex and more elusive. Quality has to be a blend of all of these elements. It can't be purely measured by metrics, important as these are.

Again the element of perception is crucial with key decision makers and users across the business needing to see hear and touch the quality metrics and reporting tools within the business to get a sense of what it truly means.

And of course, the customer's own perception of quality is critical here, in terms of receiving fast, efficient and an effortlessly interaction through the sound of a voice call or the visual dimension of a video call, and in feeling a stronger sense of connection with the business itself.

45%
COST

IS THE TOP CHALLENGE
TO GETTING TOTAL
VISIBILITY ACROSS
OPERATIONS

CHALLENGES TO THE FORE

When it comes to achieving total visibility across customers, channels, systems and internal customer-facing operations, cost remains the top challenge. 45% of respondents saw it as a barrier. It was a particularly major problem in travel and transport (78%) and finance (60%).

In terms of getting an overall 360° view of the contact centre, the main challenge in this area is likely to be around and the total cost of ownership of systems and solutions, the cost of using systems to deliver a quality service. But perhaps most important of all, the cost of integrating systems from quality monitoring to customer facing communications tools in the contact centre.

Integration of different technological systems was also regarded as a key hurdle by the survey sample, with 39% citing it.



ALL BUSINESSES SEEK TO GAIN A 360 DEGREE
VIEW OF CUSTOMER BASE

One in five respondents (20%) said: **'there are no barriers preventing me from achieving total visibility across customers channels, systems and internal customer facing operations'**

That relatively low figure illustrates the scale of the problems confronting organisations as they seek to gain a 360° view of their customer base.

39%
INTEGRATION

KEY CHALLENGE FOR
TOTAL VISIBILITY

When it comes to overcoming the challenges, there is evidence to suggest that those at the top of the business are taking a positive view and engaging with the whole concept, even if their opinions could be portrayed as a little rosily optimistic.

The survey found that 50% of business owners said there were no barriers preventing them from achieving total visibility across their operations, the highest percentage across all job types sampled.

MONITOR FOR GREATER PERFORMANCE

The level of call monitoring and evaluation capability within businesses today is patchy to say the least.

Alarming, one in ten respondents to the Enghouse Interactive survey said that they **'neither monitor nor evaluate the performance of our customer service agents on calls, nor have structured processes in place to capture customer feedback on individual calls'**



Only 35% of businesses in total said they could do both these things.

Overall, this paints a disappointing picture of the level of call monitoring and evaluation capability within many businesses with nearly two-thirds of organisations lacking in terms of technology or processes they have today.

There is clearly more work to be done in putting these more structured processes in place. It goes back to the old saying – ‘you can’t measure what you are not monitoring’. After all how can businesses improve their performance, if they are not actually assessing and proactively gauging the problem in hand.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE GROUND

When we hone in from the broader perspective of looking at key areas of functionality to focus instead on specific technological capability, the lack of quality management tools across many key areas of business becomes still clearer.

In terms of call recording, nearly one in three respondents (32%) said that they do not have any kind of system in place and just one in five (20%) say they have systems integrated across the whole business.

The lack of functionality is even more starkly illustrated by the situation with real-time speech analytics where currently just 35% of organisations have any kind of capability.

CALL RECORDING	HAVE SYSTEM IN PLACE	48%
	DO NOT HAVE IN PLACE	32%
	INTEGRATED ACROSS BUSINESS	20%

MONITORING	HAVE SYSTEM IN PLACE	43%
	DO NOT HAVE IN PLACE	33%
	INTEGRATED ACROSS BUSINESS	25%

SPEECH ANALYTICS	HAVE SYSTEM IN PLACE	23%
	DO NOT HAVE IN PLACE	65%
	INTEGRATED ACROSS BUSINESS	12%

WORK MANAGEMENT	HAVE SYSTEM IN PLACE	49%
	INTEGRATED ACROSS BUSINESS	26%
	DO NOT HAVE IN PLACE	26%

ARE YOU REALLY COMPLIANT?

The traditional perception of quality monitoring and speech analytics solutions is that a key element of their use is to help businesses remain compliant at all times.

The survey results, however, reveal that the usage of the tool for training agents and for resolving disputes is more prevalent overall.

44% of the sample said they were **'using the tool to train up customer service agents.'**

43% said they were using it **'to resolve conflicts or disputes between agents and customers.'**

While **30%** said they **'used it to remain compliant with legislation.'**



The use of quality monitoring and speech analytics for compliance purposes also differed widely across vertical sectors.

With compliance rising up the business agenda and record fines being handed out by the regulators, organisations need to be fully aware of the issue and where appropriate be putting in place quality monitoring systems to enforce it.

Unfortunately, there are also issues with the penetration of quality monitoring/-speech analytics systems across the marketplace.

23% of respondents said **'we are not using quality monitoring /speech analytics systems within the organisation'** with a further **6%** claiming **'we don't use quality monitoring at all across the organisation'**.

This is a serious concern. At their best quality monitoring technology touches all the senses of customer service delivery from visual dashboards used in the contact centre, to supervisors listening in to recorded calls, to agents reaching out to customers and engaging harmoniously with them. It is an issue that should be on the agenda of every board level director today.

CONTINUING TO DELIVER QUALITY IN AN INCREASING MULTICHANNEL WORLD

Do you monitor and measure all your customer-facing channels equally, or are you adopting a different strategy and approach for each?

This is a question that is becoming increasingly important as businesses increasingly integrate new digital channels into their customer service portfolio.

The latest social and web channels offer opportunities for greater personalisation and the chance for businesses to deliver a sensory approach to customer service through the use of video-capable tools like Skype for Business; web chat, and close collaborative interaction opportunities on social media sites and online customer forums.

It's all about high-quality customer service but it's also about delivering it quickly and efficiently.

Surprisingly, however, this is a message that has so far not effectively got across to many businesses. When asked to identify a selection of contact centre channels where customers expect an especially fast response, **the largest proportion of respondents (57%) highlighted traditional voice, followed by email (48%); social media (28%); webchat (23%); text message/SMS (15%) and IVR (3%);**

The lack of expectation of rapid response to digital channels is striking and is in part polarised around age.

For example, 53% of 25-34 year-olds felt that customers would expect a rapid response to social media, compared to just 7% in the 55+ category.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that as the digital generation gets older and new generations emerge, the understanding and expectation of social media as a channel for efficient customer service grows too. Businesses need to be aware of this and ensure they are measuring up to the growing expectations.

Digital channels are likely therefore to require agents with different skill sets and aptitudes than those who are adept at delivering service over traditional channels like voice.

It's also important to emphasise though, that in meeting these multifarious needs, businesses always ensure that the professionalism and the digital DNA of the company is maintained at all times regardless of the specific channel in use.

* Information taken from Enghouse Interactive Consumer Survey

QUALITY CAPABILITIES IN PLACE

When we look at the actual quality capabilities in place within many businesses, it becomes clear that many organisations are falling short in terms of delivering real implementations.

The Enghouse Interactive survey looked at four key metrics that any customer-facing business with an eye focused on quality should be able to deliver today, namely the ability to accurately forecast call volumes; to leverage flexible scheduling processes; to provide real-time adherence data, and finally to produce reports that measure agent, contact centre, sales and support team performance.

Alarmingly, in every case the majority of respondents said that their business did not have that capability in place, and one in five (20%) claimed their organisation could do none of the above.

It is also an issue that smaller businesses are falling behind their larger peers in this respect. 52% of organisations in the 2-9 employee category and 21% in the 10-49 employee range said they had none of the capabilities outlined above, compared to just 4% of companies of between 250-500 members of staff.

It's important to highlight just how essential it is for small businesses to have the capability to deliver high-quality customer service. To thrive in the future and compete with their larger rivals, it is key that SMEs have the quality functionality to be on a level playing field.

The better technology and processes they have, the better the touch they will have with their customers and the better the perception customers and prospects will have of them.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH CONTACT CENTRE INTERACTIONS TO MONITOR?

Another area where there is still a great deal of confusion and little consistency is around which contact centre interactions to monitor.

Indubitably, one of the worst approaches is to ask each agent to put forward a selection of calls, as bias is likely. 10% of organisations in total say that they ask each agent to do that.

But at least these businesses are monitoring interactions in some way. The survey also revealed the stark finding that more than **one in five respondents (22%) do not monitor any calls at all**. This is a worrying metric as it is clear that if organisations are going to improve the quality they are offering they need to measure and monitor for it.

42% of respondents to the survey, the largest proportion of the different methodologies assessed, said they carry out a random selection of calls while 26% say they pinpoint calls that are of unusual duration.

BRINGING QUALITY TO CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY

The Enghouse Interactive survey paints a picture of a business environment where many organisations are confused about the meaning of quality customer service and more are unsure of how to deliver it. Numerous companies are failing to do the necessary groundwork. Many do not have comprehensive systems to monitor and measure their customer service channels, or even their agents. Where solutions have been implemented, integration remains a key challenge. It's far from a universally bleak picture though. New communications channels coming on stream offer an opportunity to deliver enhanced quality of service to customers.

Regulatory pressures are a concern but also an opportunity to engage C-Level directors more in the quest for increasing the importance of quality within the business and how it can impact the bottom line.

High-quality tools and high-performance quality monitoring systems are increasingly available from vendors like Enghouse to help businesses measure and enhance the service they are offering

Here are out top five takeaways for businesses to build a truly high-quality customer service offering.

DELIVER BROAD BUT CONSISTENT CUSTOMER SERVICES ACROSS MULTIPLE CHANNELS

1

With digital technology continuing to evolve at a rapid rate and customers increasingly demanding 'anytime anywhere' service, businesses need to provide interactions across multiple channels. They also need to employ and train up agents with the necessary skill-sets to provide the highest possible levels of customer service quality to their customers. Don't forget though that you need to provide a level of consistency across all of these channels. Regardless of the mode of interaction used, the professionalism and digital DNA of your business must be maintained at all times.

2

MAKE SURE YOU MEASURE THE SERVICE YOU PROVIDE

The lack of quality monitoring and management tools in place in many businesses today is alarming. In terms of call recording, for example, nearly one in three respondents to the survey (32%) said that they do not have any kind of system in place and just one in five (20%) say they have systems integrated across the whole business. If you don't monitor and measure your customer service, how can you ever improve it?

3

GET TOP MANAGEMENT INVOLVED

To successfully build a high-quality customer service offering, you need to get your senior and board level decision-makers engaged in the process. It's a group that's increasingly worried about the problems that occur when quality is lacking. 45% of directors, for example, said they were not confident that their business had the systems and processes in place to ensure their customer service operation could achieve regulatory compliance, for example, and a total of 6% said they were not confident at all.

C-level directors are increasingly concerned about the quality service levels their business is delivering, so make sure you have that sense of quality at the forefront of your whole operation.

4

PUT THE BEST QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN PLACE

Remember you can't effectively measure quality without implementing the best available quality management and monitoring systems. Although most commonly found in call centre arenas, these tools can be used across many business areas that need to understand the quality of the service delivered, from help desks, desk based sales teams to individual operators and call attendants.

In the past, these groups have simply recorded interactions and used the recordings to review performance both in real-time and historically. Today the best of these tools like the Enghouse Interactive Quality Management suite, for example, provides extra value by delivering tools that add meaning and consistency to these reviews. It enables definition of performance criteria and allows consistent measurement against these criteria that can then be specifically tailored to each business process.

5

DON'T FORGET THE SENSES OF QUALITY

Last but not least, don't forget the senses of quality. Measurement and monitoring are important in the delivery of customer service quality but so too is the more intangible experience you deliver to customers, the video that provides an invaluable insight into how to fix a faulty fridge, the call recording that helps hone the skills of the customer service agent and most important, the sense of always being in touch with the customer, able to reach out and deliver optimum customer service at all times.



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